

nature, than the other nations whom he had created.

This distinction was very flattering, in regard to the Jews, who were thus raised to a superior order of men. The whole has the appearance of a wild romance, and yet they attempt to prove it.

In order to this, he compares the first chapter of Genesis, where it is said God creates man by his word, with the second, wherein Adam is introduced as the work of God's own hands.

Again, the forty-seventh psalm joined to the forty-ninth, in which the Gentiles are expressly called the sons of the earth; and this they believe to be an evident proof, that God created two sorts of men; the Jews then being made of a finer mould, had all the reason on their side not to be inquisitive about the other nations, who drew their origin from the Pre-Adamites. This was not an effect of their pride, but a self-consciousness of their own dignity. They were by this second creation to live eternally, whilst the Pre-Adamites and their posterity were doomed to death, as a natural consequence of the corruptibility of the matter of which they were composed. Moreover, the Jewish genealogies are clearly traced from Adam their first father; whereas, in the pedigrees of the Gentiles, no order is kept, no knowledge is preserved of their origin.

From these proofs, as they call them, drawn from the scriptures, they proceed to others out of the Jewish Rabbins.

Adam, say the Rabbins, had a tutor named Samboscer, and who could this be but a Pre-Adamite?

Cain having killed his brother Abel, was afraid lest he should kill himself. He became captain of a band of robbers, who were they? He married, yet Adam had no daughter. What wife could he get? He built a town; What architects, masons, carpenters, and other workmen did he employ? The answer to all these questions is, in one, *Pre-Adamites*. They add further, that the Egyptian and Chinese chronologies, reach many thousand years backward before Adam was created; and the people who lived then, must have been Pre-Adamites. It is certain, that the Mahometans believe, there were Pre-Adamites, and they have actually given us the names of some of them. The Pre-Adamites believe further, that there was to be two Messiahs; one of whom is come, but there is another in time to be sent to the Jews.

These are all the particulars we have been able to collect concerning this extraordinary sect; and the notion seems to have been collected in part from all the heresies that ever yet sprung up in the world. It is surprizing that such men should call themselves Christians; for all Christians, let their notions in other respects be ever so invidious, still profess to believe the bible.

Now, had no notice been taken of the creation and fall of man, except in the Old Testament, there might have been some reason to doubt; but throughout the New Testament the Mosaic account of the fall is frequently referred to, and considered as the fundamental article upon which the necessity for Christ's making an atonement is built. As for Cain's marrying a wife while Adam had no children, is but a silly objection; because

this event might have happened above one hundred years after the creation of the world, and certainly Adam might have had many daughters in that time.

Their notion that men lived like beasts before Adam was created, they have taken from the Pagan mythology, as appears from many of those poets; but what will men not do when left to the indulgence of their own corrupt fancies? The truth does not give them satisfaction, they seek out for something new, and then they are less satisfied than before. They add one fiction to another, till their religion, if it deserves that name, would put an Heathen to the blush. It is even more ridiculous than that of Sommono-Code in the East-Indies, or any of those we have treated of in other parts of the world.

We shall conclude this article in the words of the late learned lord-president Forbes, in his excellent thoughts on religion, where he supports the Mosaic history with a strength of argument not known before.

"The thing Moses begins with, is the creation of the heavens and the earth by the Deity; which though true to the conviction of all mankind, no ancient wise-men ever found out. Here is no ridiculous theogonia, no eternal chaos, no fortuitous concourse of atoms; but a fair and a true declaration, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

He further takes notice of the institution of the sabbath; which, though the antients observed, they knew not the reason, or occasion of.

The declaration of this undiscovered truth gives strong prepossession in favour of the rest.

The next important thing is, that man fell from a state of innocence. This, as has been said, every living man must find to be true, upon examination; and yet none of the wise, whose works have come to us, ever thought of it: nothing more certain, nothing more important to be attended to; nothing less known: but this Moses distinctly relates as the cause, or at least the occasion, of every thing that followed.

The third thing he marks is, the confusion, and desperate state, in which man was upon the fall; ashamed of his fault, without hope in the mercy of God, and therefore studious to hide himself from him. This, the fall being true, must necessarily be true too; and therefore we readily believe Moses.

The fourth thing he relates is, that God revealed his purpose of mercy to mankind, and thereby delivered them from dread, despair, and confusion. The words, in which Moses relates the promise of mercy, are, that "the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," and "the seed of the serpent shall bruise his heel."

These words, which are all that is said, do not, it is true, say that this "seed of the woman" should be sacrificed; though "bruising the heel" looks mighty like the suffering of the lower, and least noble part of that seed; nor do they say that sacrifice, and the observances of the law, were then instituted: but it appears plainly, that, soon after, Cain and Abel offered, and that at a stated or appointed time; it appears Noah sacrificed, and that, in his days, man was commanded to abstain



from eating blood, as a thing sacred ; it appears the patriarchs did so, without any precedent, institution, or commandment, recorded, and that their sacrifices were respected by the Deity ; and it appears that all the nations of the earth, who sprung from the first parents, practised sacrifice with nearly the same rites : wherefore, it may fairly be concluded, that sacrifice, and the rites thereto belonging, were instituted upon the first promulgation of the evangelium, the tidings of mercy, and from that institution were transmitted to all mankind ; and it would imply an absurdity to suppose, that this emblematical, commemorative observance was instituted without man's knowing the reason and meaning of it.

We know by history, without the help of Moses, that all mankind sacrificed in hope of mercy ; from reason we discover, that those hopes must have been founded on revelation, and that sacrifice, which of itself could signify nothing, must have been no more than a memorial, by institution : and now from Moses we learn, that those hopes were actually founded on explicit revelation by the God of nature ; and that sacrifice, which the same God says in itself signifies nothing, was practised, just after, by the favorites of the Deity, and acceptable by him ; and that he gave a new model of that institution, correcting abuses, in the wilderness.

We learn, next, from Moses, that God was pleased at different times to appear to, and converse with men, Adam, Enoch, Noah ; and that nevertheless, men corrupted themselves so monstrously, an early instance whereof is Cain's killing his brother Abel, that the Deity brought on a flood, which destroyed the whole earth, and with it all men, except Noah and his family.

This flood all antient nations have confused traditions about ; and though exuviae, still remaining near the surface of the earth, give very

strong evidence of it, yet there is no sensible account of it, from the antients ; which strongly raises the credit and authority of Moses's writings.

By the direction to take into the ark a greater number of clean than of unclean beasts, and by Noah's practice, immediately after the flood, of sacrificing of every clean beast and bird, it is evident the distinction of clean and unclean does not depend originally on the law of Moses, but has its origin before the flood, probably at the first publication of grace to Adam.

As the flood destroyed all the corrupted, and to Noah and his family was a demonstration of the power of, and obedience due to, the Deity, this great event was a total extirpation of all false religion ; and, humanly speaking, it was to be hoped the faith and religious service of men would have continued long pure.

But that was not the case : for, as Adam's son Cain sinned early, so did Noah's son Ham ; he merited to be pronounced accursed of his father, soon after the deliverance from the flood. And before the memory of that dreadful judgment was lost, men meditated the setting up a false religion and service to the heavens at Babel ; which the Deity disappointed, by confounding and dividing their imaginations, so that they separated and dispersed at that time."

Such were the sentiments of this great man, and whoever reads his account of the creation of the world, will cease to reject the Mosaic history. It is the misfortune of all our Deists, and framers of new religions, that they set up their own reason in opposition to Divine revelation. And they seal their argument with a fixed resolution not to pay any regard to what is proposed to them, so that they are left to the wickedness of their own hearts, and justly forsaken by their maker.

## A C C O U N T of the L A B A D I S T S.

**L**ABADIE had been brought up a Jesuit in France, then became a Protestant, and was made a minister at Middleburgh, in Zealand. He was eloquent, but not very learned ; which defect was supplied by art and cunning. His dispute against Wolfsgue, minister at Utrecht, on account of his treatise concerning the interpretation of scripture, shews him to have been contentious and even seditious. His behaviour in that quarrel was unfair and deceitful ; so that his enemies were not quite in the wrong, when they described him as an haughty, proud, self-conceited, stubborn hypocrite.

Yet he had admirers, who praised his humility, and modest carriage, and undertook his defence with so much warmth, highly approving his project of reforming even the grand Calvinistical reformers of the United Provinces, that a schism had like to have ensued in the church of Middleburgh. But his design failed, notwithstanding all the endeavours of his friends. He was deposed from his ministry by the synod of Dort, in May, 1669, having before that been suspended from his function by the synod of Norde.



The sentence of his deposition says, "That from his first coming into Holland, he designed to reform the church, and maintained that this was to be brought about by a separation, and setting up a new church of the elect;" which he actually began at Middleburgh, and in other places. He taught that whoever could, or thought fit, should have free liberty to speak in their assemblies, on whatever text was proposed.

"God has been pleased to hear at last the prayers, tears, and groans of his little ones, and opened a way to a happy separation. This separation has been and now is very advantageous to us, since we are about three hundred well chosen members in our assembly all elect, and breathing a true Christian spirit.

We give thanks to God, who hath chosen us, all of one heart and soul, unanimous in speaking openly all truths, remedying all abuses, in doctrine, in administering the sacraments, and in morals, with a full intention to reform ourselves according to the model of the primitive Christians. We meet twice a day, morning and evening, and thrice on Sundays.

We do not preach in pulpits, but all sit on benches, without any difference between the rich and the poor, excepting that the pastors, elders, or those who speak, sit on a bench made like the rest, but somewhat higher, in order to be seen and heard. Modesty, union, humility, zeal and piety, are such amongst us, that we daily give God due praises for the establishment of our church. We have several doctors and eminent persons, humble, fervent and pious.

No abuse is tolerated, no excess allowed in dress, ornaments and vanities; nor are the trades subservient to them encouraged. Our lives are marked in every point by the rule and standard of the gospel and apostolical doctrine, being firmly resolved to become a living representation of the primitive church, in our belief and practice.

Many are astonished, but many are drawn in from other places; for God has almost every where admitted some to us, and to our spirits.

Even this day, being the first of the year 1669, we met before day-light to explain the sixth and seventh verses of the fifth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, and are fully bent on casting away the old leaven."

Notwithstanding the opposition which Labadie met with, yet there were several persons of note who embraced his doctrines, and joined themselves to his party. Some of whom were expelled France.

Labadie and Madam Bourignon were contemporaries, but their spirits did not unite. Labadie was not spiritual enough to be her colleague, and too stubborn to become her disciple. Both were of an artful, troublesome temper, and therefore it was impossible that they should agree together. The enlightened woman despised the regenerated man.

At last Labadie died at Alena, 1674, in the arms of his beloved Schurman, and left Peter Yvon to succeed him, who brought the Labadists together at Wiwert in Friesland, a manor belonging to the family of Somerdyke. He

had before spread his fanaticism from Middleburgh to Amsterdam, and he had likewise a settlement near Ulkrahist, where he set up a printing-house. From thence he went through Westphalia, and at last to Hamburg. Every where he made proselytes of both sexes, till one Anthony de la Margue published his reasons for leaving his sect, which although it threw them into disrepute by the discovery then made, yet they are not extinct, for some of them are still to be found in Friesland and Groningen.

These Labadists were always by the Dutch considered as a sort of Quakers; but although they may resemble them in some things, yet in others there is a vast difference. We do not know that there were ever any of these Labadists in England, and the reason seems to be, their notions were not known during the civil wars, when the soil for new and unheard of religions was so rich, that every doctrine, however absurd, was embraced as soon as taught.

Connected with the Labadists, were two small sects, formed by Voet, a great lawyer, and Cocceius, a celebrated divine. At first, they agreed in most things with the Labadists, but at last they quarrelled concerning a whimsical method of explaining the scripture. Cocceius pretended to teach the people to preach without study or labour; which strange things are always taking with the vulgar, and they think them sublime, for want of understanding them; and look upon them as deep mysteries, because they are obscure.

This singular method is reduced to the following heads:

First, the periodical changes of the church, Of the New Testament, which they find in every text.

Secondly, the types and figures without end or measure, drawn from the antient history and worship.

Thirdly, an everlasting affectation of applying to Christ and the gospel.

Fourthly, discovering modern events in the antient prophecies.

Lastly, the numberless and exaggerated distinctions, betwixt the faithful under the Moisaical dispensation and Christianity.

The explanation of these types and figures always serves to amuse the vulgar, whereas morality and sound divinity frequently prove tiresome. After all, we are not to condemn one side or the other, only that we must, according to the design of this work, take notice, that the followers of Cocceius maintain that the command given to the Jews to keep one day in seven for rest, is part of the ceremonial law, from the observance of which Christ has freed us. That Christ will reign temporally on earth, after the destruction of Anti-christ, and that the Jews are to be converted at that time.

One of the chief tenets of these people, is to banish morality from their sermons, which they look upon as unseasonable. For as St. Paul often mentions, that the law is abolished, and its opposition to the gospel; so they pretend, that



that preaching up duty and obedience, the justice of God and his rights, the awe in which we ought to stand of him and his judgements, which are relative to the law, is the same as giving a new law to the spirit of slavery, by reproaches and threatenings contrary to the gospel, which breathes only sweetness and grace.

They say, that Christ dying for us has not only taken upon him the punishment due to our sins, but our very sins themselves, and draw from thence consequences against the necessity of repentance.

To conclude our account of this sect, we must observe, that many of the antient Heathens and the primitive Heretics, were such; nay, they are to be found among the Heathens in the East-Indies, and among the Mahometans. All these novelties take their rise from an unsettledness of mind, from a vain desire to be wiser than God has ordained; and in this people copy exactly after the conduct of their first parents, who, to satisfy their curiosity, eat the forbidden fruit, and so involved themselves and their whole posterity in ruin.

From the beginning, a rational being, unaided by learning, and the experience of former ages, could easily discern the hand of an intelligent, wise, powerful, and very bountiful creator, in the whole and in every part of the fabric of this system that fell under his ken; and could as easily discover his own obligations to, and his dependence on that being. And accordingly we see, by the earliest accounts of time that have come to our hands, all mankind, full of a persuasion of their dependence, full of reverence to the deity, soliciting his favour and protection by prayer, by ceremonies, by sacrifices, sometimes human, nay of their first-born; and imputing all their favourable or cross incidents, that happened to them, to the good-will or displeasure of the sovereign being, whom it was their chief study to please.

It is true, that the notions they generally entertained of the deity were imperfect, as well as their manner of serving him corrupted; circumstances that can easily be accounted for from the weakness and perverseness of those who took the lead in directing their religious opinions and

practices. But still it is undeniably true, that the gross of mankind were serious in their belief of the existence of a deity, of their dependence on him, and of the occasion they had for his protection and favour.

To this general disposition of mankind it was in part owing, that the gospel, upon its first publication, made so rapid and so surprizing progress. No man at that time doubted of the existence of a deity, or of man's dependence on him. It was easy to satisfy every one who admitted these propositions, that mankind, by the corruption into which they had fallen, stood mightily in need of some intercessor, some mean by which they might be saved from the weight of their sins. And it is no marvel, that evidence given to men so convinced, that salvation might be had through Jesus, should be received with gladness.

And accordingly we see, that, in a trifle of time, the herd of mankind, in defiance of all discouragements, and of the most severe persecutions from power, greedily embraced and professed this faith; and continued stedfastly in the profession of it, notwithstanding the monstrous absurdities with which the teachers of that faith loaded it, and the more monstrous and shocking lives and manners of the teachers; until of late years, that what ought to have been improved into a blessing to mankind, has unfortunately turned out to their destruction.

In the period just mentioned, wicked and voluptuous men pursued wicked and voluptuous courses; and many gross villanies and abuses were daily committed by profligate men, which the degenerate condition of mankind produced. But still these wickednesses were disguised, disowned, or some how sought to be atoned for. The villain dissembled at least, and was forced to wear a cloak of hypocrisy. No man dreamed of professing openly, that he denied the being of a God, or his dependence on, and being accountable to him. And, if any one was indeed so foolish, as well as impious, as to entertain such a notion, which by the bye is with us a question, there was no temptation for uttering it; because there was no chance that any one should concur in supporting such an opinion.



## ACCOUNT of those who are called in HOLLAND, COLLEGIANTERS, and RHYNSBURGHERS.

**T**HESSE people have been settled at Rhynsburgh above one hundred years, and they meet twice in every year.

This is known in the country, for they seldom hold their assemblies in public; and it is not much to be wondered at, that foreigners should hardly be able to know their names. The following account, however, is authentic, as the author says he had been for several years one of the chief members of their society.

We must first take notice, that they are much mistaken who take it for granted, that the Collegianters and Rhynsburghers are the same, but to clear up this matter, we must put them in mind, that the Collegianters owe their name to the manner in which their small societies were first formed. The nature of these religious meetings cannot be better described, than by comparing them to the friendly societies, which we call clubs. They have likewise some resemblance to the mystical schools, which we have already mentioned in our account of those people; but we shall call them clubs.

In these clubs, therefore, every man may, and has a right to speak concerning whatever religion he may outwardly profess, what system soever he may follow, and this he may do, let his notions be ever so much out of the common way of thinking. But this is only granted on condition that he allows the scriptures to be divinely inspired. Whether churchmen or laymen, every one explains what text he thinks proper, and may utter freely whatever he thinks concerning religion, either in general, or in regard to any particular sect. Women are not allowed the same privilege as among quakers; for they must hold their peace, and, indeed, these clubs do not pretend to have any thing to do with the spirit or with its impulses.

When any one of the club speaks, he pretends that it is the effect of his meditations on the sacred scriptures, or of his own ingenious discoveries. Nor is the club to be kept under subjection by any one doctor, or by three or four, who, in most other assemblies, keep all the discourse to themselves.

Besides the club at Rhynsburgh, where they are most numerous, there are many others in several towns and villages in Holland, at Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Haerlem, Groningen, Lewardin, and many others. As to the villages, the most noted club meets at Sardan, and is remarkable for being composed of members who belong to various sects. For, lest our readers should forget it, we must once more put them in mind, that in those clubs only one essential

point is agreed on, the divine inspiration of the scripture. They are at full liberty to explain it in what manner they please, and to build any system they think proper upon it.

Their public exercise begins by reading a psalm in prose and singing one in verse. Then a prayer is repeated, which, being ended, the text appointed for the Christian entertainment is read. The Brethren present are then invited to make use of the freedom granted in those clubs, in stating such objections, in making what remarks, or giving what admonitions and exhortations they please. If no one rises to speak, then those, who were appointed to handle that subject, rise and speak to it; for lest the club should separate without any discourse, two are always appointed to speak; when they have done, silence is kept for a considerable time, then any one may make what observation he pleases, to what has been said. The whole ceremony concludes with a suitable application and prayer.

No register is kept of the names of the members belonging to the club, and in reality they are composed of people borrowed from all sects, in order to meet every Sunday and Wednesday. If the divine authority of holy writ is owned, none of them are to be called Heretics; just like the sectaries in England, who all acknowledge the authority of the sacred scriptures, and yet in their explications, all differ from each other.

These clubs were began about the year 1619, and owe their beginning to the spirit of persecution, which then raged in Holland, and drove many of the people, as it always does, into the wildest extremes. Three brothers, of the name of Codde, all Arminians, were the first founders of these clubs; one of them was a professor of Hebrew, and the others were plain husbandmen. They were well versed in the scriptures which they had carefully studied.

Arminianism was then at a low ebb, both because it had been condemned at the synod of Dort, and likewise upon political accounts, so that when any of that profession were discovered, they were treated as the enemies of God and society. The Arminian ministers were forbid preaching under the severest penalties. Many of them were banished, and others were thrown into prison. Many of them had their goods seized, and rewards were offered for apprehending their persons, while their wives and children were left unprovided for. All this was occasioned by the cruel acts of the Calvinistical synod of Dort, which had no more right to decide on such things than the man in the moon.

The first of these clubs was established at



Wormand, a village where one of the Vander-Code's lived. A great number of Arminians, who could not then meet openly, nor, indeed privately, for fear of being cast into prison, were overjoyed, at meeting with this opportunity of assembling together as friends, under the name of a society very common in that country, and in which religion is never supposed to be concerned.

When the heat of persecution abated, several of the Arminian clergy returned into their own country, and offered their services as pastors, but were told by Vander-Code, that their new institution being on the model prescribed by St. Paul, did not admit of pastors.

This club was soon removed to Rhynsburgh, where it increased considerably, and was joined by two famous pastors belonging to the Arminians. Several other places in Holland followed this example, and had also their clubs, which at first were frequently disturbed by the civil power, but at last connived at.

This is the best account we could get of these clubs, though others pretend that they are of an older date, though established on the same plan, governed by the same rules, and grounded on the same expressions of St. Paul. This dispute may be ended by owning that the oldest of these clubs were made up of Baptists, and some other sectaries, and that after all, such meetings may be held during all persecutions, as has always been the case, and probably always will be.

But these clubs were not confined to Holland. Grindal, archbishop of Canterbury, in the reign of queen Elizabeth, gave great encouragement to them. Of these we shall say a few words by way of digression.

The time of their meeting was once a month, sometimes twice, only churchmen were allowed to speak, the subject, and the persons who were to handle it, were appointed before-hand. The youngest of those preachers began, and the others followed according to their age, so that the oldest preached last, recapitulated what the others said, commended what deserved it, and censured faults with mildness.

Their whole discourse was in order to compare the text in hand with others, to settle its true and genuine sense to the sacred writers aim, the exact confirmation of the words, the various translations, the consequences that flowed from them, and to expose the false glosses of Heretics and quibbling doctors, who turn the meaning of the sacred scriptures to any sense they think proper.

But let us now return to the Dutch clubs.

They made an open profession of toleration so far, that in 1677 and in 1680, most of those clubs in Holland, contributed largely to the enriching and endowing at Amsterdam, the college of Orange, which is founded also for the maintenance of orphans, not only of their own sect, but of others, and the same has been done in other places of Holland. A glorious effect of that humane disposition which ought to influence men, notwithstanding all the disputes about religion.

As for the Rhynsburghers, they are composed

of people of many different opinions, who from all parts meet at Rhynsburgh, as they did in former times at Jerusalem. They assemble only twice a year, namely, at Whitsuntide, and on the last Sunday in August, to partake of the Lord's-Supper; and whoever leads a regular course of life according to the scripture precepts, may be admitted, whatever opinion he may otherwise have, even about the nature and essence of the sacrament.

The evening before the communion, they are to spend in self-examination, in reviewing their hearts and lives. Two discourses are preached before they receive, the first on the Lord's Supper in general, and the second on the death of Christ in particular. They likewise explain their motives for meeting together in that village, to unite themselves as Christians and brethren, without distinction of parties, without declaring themselves, some for Paul and some for Apollos, as the Jews celebrated their assemblies in their temples together, not minding the disputes between the Pharisees and Sadduces. They deplore the evils which flow from schisms. "Is it not much better, say they, to admit every Christian, who believes the scriptures, and endeavours to live up to its rules according to the law of Christ, we therefore invite them all to take the communion with us, without minding the odious appellations with which they are bespattered, and without giving any room in our souls to that gall of bitterness, which most men look upon as a proof of their zeal for the doctrine of Christ."

These, and such discourses being ended, they perform the communion service in the same manner as the Calvinists. The alms collected from the faithful, are deposited in the hands of the sexton of that village, who gives a receipt, and distributes it to the poor of Rhynsburgh. This solemnity is concluded with a thanksgiving sermon, just in the same manner as among the Calvinists.

Next morning they take leave of one another, with mutual exhortations to perseverance in the true religion and faithful service of God. All may speak, teach or administer the sacraments, yet their functions are generally performed by men who are prepared for it, and appointed thereto.

Next to the Lord's-Supper, the only remarkable ceremony observed by them, is their baptism, of which one of their own members gives the following account. The candidate makes publicly his profession of faith on a Saturday in the morning, before an assembly of the people held for that purpose. A discourse is delivered on the nature and excellency of baptism. The minister and candidate go together to a pond behind a house belonging to the sect, which, on some occasions, is used as a lodging house for travellers who have no money to pay for resting at the inns. In that pond the catechumen is baptized by immersion; if he is a man he has a waistcoat and drawers; if a woman, a boddy and petticoat, with leads at the bottom, for the sake of decency, which is rather necessary than otherwise.

The minister, in the same dress as the men wear,



wear, is also in the water and plunges them in it, pronouncing, at the same time, the form used by most Christian congregations. This being over, they put on their cloaths, go back to the meeting, and hear an exhortation to perseverance, in complying with the precepts of Christ. A psalm is sung, and the whole concludes with prayer.

These are the most singular customs observed by those people, who in Holland are called Collegianters and Rhynsburghers. Some have asserted, that these sects are much diminished; but this is only in the outward appearance; for all our modern sectaries have learned to dissemble better than their ancestors, and that this disguise makes some over credulous, but devoutly in-

clined people flatter themselves with the hopes that heresy and libertinism lose ground. But probably they are most in the right, who think that the religion of Mammon does get a superiority over all. We must, however, suspend our judgement, and desire that the grace of God may be granted to all mankind. This should be the pious wish of every Christian who desires the salvation of the human race, without spending his time in contentious controversy, which can never minister to edifying. Talking of religion is one thing, obeying its rules in sincerity is another. Let this mind therefore be in us, which was also in Christ Jesus, and let us be followers of him as dear children.

## A C C O U N T of the P O L I S H B R E T H R E N.

**T**H E S E people are a sort of Unitarians; and in other points of their doctrines they may be ranged among the Socinians; for they come the nearest to them of any sect whatever. They are called Polish, because they took their rise in Poland, although at present they have churches in many parts of Europe.

They assert, that the doctrine of the trinity destroys the unity of the godhead, and the simplicity of the Supreme Being, adding, that if there are three persons, there may be three hundred; and thus a perfect system of Polytheism, or a plurality of Gods, is established. They pretend, likewise, that the texts made use of in support of the trinity, ought to be understood in another sense. Thus, when Christ says, I and the father are one, they say it means no more than that they had one object in view in the plan of man's redemption.

As for the incarnation of Christ and his two natures, they believe that doctrine to be useless to mankind, and maintain that it cannot be proved by scripture. For, say they, had it been necessary for obtaining eternal happiness to believe the mystery of the incarnation, the bible would have mentioned it as clearly and distinctly as the other truths we are obliged to profess openly. But we must not dwell too long on such dangerous blasphemies. They say that God does not know before-hand what will happen to men, and that the cause of predestination is not in God but in man.

Christ's body was mortal, and therefore it was necessary that he should suffer death in common with the rest of mankind; for like the Arians and Socinians, they will not acknowledge his divinity.

In the preamble of their discipline, they give

a definition of the Christian religion; it is, they say, a rational worship, God being the eternal reason, can require nothing unreasonable or absurd, paid to God through Jesus Christ, there being no other name by which men are saved; in spirit to exclude ceremonies, and in truth to reject the types and shadows of the mosaical law, with the hope of an immortal life, because such a worship must ensnare us with a study of trust in God's goodness and expectation of immortality, in consideration of our faithful compliance with it.

But for this end two things are required; first, to admit no doctrine but that of the gospel, and to own no other teacher but Christ. The other to raise no building, but upon the foundation of Christianity, that is, the true doctrine of Christ, who is, and ought to be, the theme of all those who profess it. Christ being gone to heaven, it became necessary that in his absence this doctrine should be preserved, and the faithful governed by wise, pious and learned persons, who should not be the masters, fathers, or princes of the church; for there is one only father and sovereign, which is God; one only master which is Christ; but they take up the deposit of faith, and deliver it to others as they received it. Our dependence is not on them but on Christ; we do not obey them but Christ.

They ought not to exalt themselves above others, nor ought the faithful to prefer the one to the other, out of a bias or prejudice, in favour of a particular person, to the detriment and injury offered to another. Such behaviour would be a pernicious occasion of ambition in the church. Obey those who are set over you, that is, shew them due respect, as being the dispensers of truth. Submit to this same doctrine they preach, as from Christ. In a word, the church



church is a monarchy, and Christ is its only monarch.

One of their writers divides the whole church into six different parts, of which four are to take care of the ecclesiastical policy.

- I. Patrons, or Protectors of the church.
- II. The Pastors.
- III. The Elders.
- IV. The Deacons.

The last mentioned and the patrons, are to provide for the bodily wants; the pastors and elders are to take care of the spiritual wants.

We shall call those patrons or protectors of churches, who either build them or keep them in decent repair at their own expence. Whether they are the first founders or only carry on the work by others. Those also who provide a maintenance for the pastors or elders, or raise charitable contributions for the poor belonging to a particular church, are considered as props of the church. We detest anarchy as the root of great evils, but we do not allow any to usurp the Supreme authority, which belongs only to Christ.

The protectors and pastors must, or ought mutually, to support and pay a deference to each other, and all unanimously consent, with joint endeavours, to promote the glory of God, and the cause of religion. Pastors are the ministers of Christ, and dispensers of the mysteries of God. They hold the rudder of the ecclesiastical commonwealth, and watch for the safety of the church, along with the elders, and the other members of the consistory. The pastors are all equal; their age and labour may draw respect and veneration, but do not give them any arbitrary authority. The young ones must pay great regard to those advanced in years; but they ought not to take occasion from thence to behave haughtily to their younger brethren. Age and experience must have some weight, when it promotes the interest of the church, but the advice of the younger must not be despised, when by common consent their counsels are found both profitable and adapted to the state of the brethren.

Such is the account that these people give of themselves; and were their doctrines equal to their discipline, we should not have much reason to find fault with them. But to hear the name of Christ so often mentioned with terms of respect, by those very men who mock at his mediatorial office, and despise all his glories, we are led to say with the psalmist, *All men are liars.*

Their elders are described as persons of known probity, and great experience, who are jointly commissioned to govern the church. Age and riches are not considered in that choice, but virtue and abilities. The functions of deacons are well known; they are the treasurers of their respective churches, and are to give an exact account of what they receive for the maintenance of widows, orphans, and other poor.

These are the duties of the four orders, who govern the policy of their churches.

The choosing or ordaining of pastors belongs to the synod or assembly, who meet by authority of

their church, in order to examine representatives on this important occasion. Elders and deacons are chosen in the same manner. A good life and a solid judgment, are the chief qualities required in elders, preferably to learning. Their piety is a tacit condemnation of vice, and hinders its progress. A solid understanding helps them in giving advice, and composing differences. Deacons likewise may perform their duties without learning. Good sense and a good conscience, with tried fidelity, are the only necessary dispositions to that office.

When a pastor has a call, his election and ordination, is performed in the following manner.

Whether this be done in a general convocation of the faithful, or in private and before a small assembly, prayers and a sermon, with psalms, are requisite, as in the Sunday's office. They begin with singing and prayer; the faithful are warned and disposed by an exhortation, to the ceremony. The sermon is always concerning the duties of a pastor, which being ended, three pastors rise from their seats, and go to the person who is to be ordained, and who at that time is kneeling. They lay their hands upon him, and hold them on his head till prayers are ended. These prayers being finished, and the ordained person still kneeling, one of the three pastors desires the faithful to pray for him. Then all kneel, and conclude the ceremony with singing a psalm suitable to the occasion.

The sermon includes the mutual duties of pastors and elders, with those subsisting between them and their flocks. The union that should be found among them, which is not to be a blind obedience, or slavish, the pastors ruling like fathers with patience. That they prefer the interest and welfare of the flock to all other considerations, serving the church with joy and freedom, not as mercenary hired servants, but giving good examples in order to enforce their instructions, and avoiding to be concerned in temporal affairs, and worldly cases, lest their more essential duties should be neglected.

Pastoral functions consist in preaching, administering the sacrament, visiting the sick, exhorting and praying for the faithful. Preaching is one of the chief parts of their discipline. Prayers and psalms, which are said and sung before and after sermon, raises their hearts to the most elevated pitch of devotion, and inflame their minds with devout zeal. The instructions are to be,

First, without any shew of erudition, wholly tending to edification.

Secondly, without disputes, and nothing to be mentioned in them but what is necessary to salvation.

Thirdly, without eloquence, or any ornament by flowers of speech, or any choice or fine expressions.

Fourthly, without confusion, clear and methodical, the arguments conclusive, earnestly moving sinners to repentance.

Lastly, without enlarging much on particular topics.

All their notions concerning divine things are very loose and carnal, and it may be justly said



said of them, that they have no more than the outside of religion.

As they deny all sort of mysteries in religion, so they make very little use of the bible but to suit their purpose.

In celebrating the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, they are plain and simple. They sit round a table covered with a linen cloth, on which is placed some bread, cut into small pieces, and an empty chalice, into which the deacon pours some wine; all this is decently covered till the hour of communion service.

The pastor stands at the table, and having administered the communion to the others, he then takes it himself sitting. Exhortation, prayer, and singing of psalms accompany this ceremony, which ends with a general blessing.

They reject infant baptism, nor will they admit any to that sacrament, till they have made a profession of their faith. When they meet for that purpose, the pastor explains the effects, excellencies, and dignity of baptism; makes an exhortation to the candidates, and desires that God will baptize them with his holy spirit. When all the people present have said Amen, the pastor goes into the water, and those who are to be baptized, go in likewise and kneel. The minister then says, "I baptize thee with water, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and may the Lord Jesus baptize thee with his holy spirit." While he pronounces these words, he puts one hand on the head, and another on the chin of the persons to be baptized, and dips them. He then comes out of the water, and a psalm is sung, and the whole concludes with prayer.

In the funerals of the Polish Brethren, the following ceremonies are observed. The relations of the deceased are left to their choice, to bury either in church-yards, or any where else; for they consider that as an indifferent thing.

The body of the deceased is placed in its coffin, at the door, or in the ground-room of the house, till the time of burial. The pastor then begins a psalm, and sings it with the faithful pre-

sent. He then preaches a sermon, to comfort the relations for their loss, and to exhort them to reflect on the uncertainty and short duration of human life. Then prayers are said; but not for the deceased, for they never pray for the dead. All this being over, the assembly go out; and the pastor, standing at the door, takes leave of the company in the name of the deceased. Before the body is put into the ground, another exhortation is made, accompanied with a short encomium on the virtues of the deceased, which is generally a piece of fulsome flattery. The ceremony is concluded by eating and drinking. Wine is given in plenty to those who honour the funeral with their presence, to drown sorrow, as is the custom of all the northern countries, and as it was with many nations of old.

From what has been said of these people, it appears plainly, that they are a compound of Arianism and Socinianism. There is no doubt but they think they do God good service, by inventing a new scheme of religion; nor is there less doubt but that they look with the most sovereign contempt, on all those who differ from them in sentiment. We have our Saviour's authority to assert, that many shall say unto him, Lord, Lord, have we not cast out devils in thy name, and in thy name done wonderful things; but he will say unto them, depart from me, I know you not, ye workers of iniquity. It would be happy for mankind, were they to attend more to the spirit and power of religion than to the externals. But human nature has been the same in all ages, and will be the same to the last.

We shall conclude with one remark, which we do not remember ever to have heard made; and that is, that the numerous sects to be met with, all professing Christianity, and yet all in one thing or other, differing concerning its most important articles, are a proof of its authenticity. Were there no real coin in the world, there would be none counterfeited; and had not Christianity been a Divine institution; we should not have found so many men, from motives of interest or pride, setting up new imitations of the genuine original.

## H I S T O R Y of D E I S M.

**B**Y Deists, is meant, those who acknowledge the being of one God, but deny all supernatural revelation.

We shall consider them in a two-fold light; first, as to their principles in general; and, secondly, their present state in Europe.

The generality of mankind know no difference between Deists and Atheists, yet they are widely different; not to say it is hard, even next to an impossibility, that there should be any real Athe-

ists. The existence of a supreme Being is so evidently proved, the distinguishing characters of good and evil, and their consequences are so deeply engraved in the conscience of every man, that they cannot entirely throw off the notion of a God. Accordingly, we find that the most unpolished and barbarous nations have always entertained some belief of a godhead, and cannot be looked upon as Atheists. The same must be said of the Chinese, of the inhabitants of Ja-



pan, and of all idolators : for though Tertullian says truly that there is no God, if he is not one ; yet it does not follow that all those who worshipped more than one, thought that there was none.

Atheism then is a chimera, but Deism is not so ; to own the being of one God, to worship him, yet so as to embrace, out of policy, what religion soever is most in vogue, and favoured by the government, is as natural to the general bent of mankind, as to live under that government as long as our affairs require it, or our inclination leads us. As for those, if there be any such, whose principles are destructive of public society, they might be thought to go beyond Deism ; but either they are not serious in their lawless schemes, which if successful, would prove their own ruin, as well as of the rest of mankind ; or rather they act against their own knowledge, to acquire an empty reputation of senseless wit.

On the other side, both in civil and ecclesiastical societies, several are accused of Deism, who are no ways guilty of it ; and the more they complain of such usage, all their protestations serve only to strengthen the prejudice conceived against them. Thus an indifferency as to the various opinions which divide christendom, too extensive a toleration of all sects, persuasions of divers kinds, such as those of the Baptists, Socinians, Remonstrants, &c. Even too much freedom in censuring the faults of churchmen, and the quibbles of the schools, are looked upon as the worst sort of Deism by fiery zealots, or over-scrupulous Christians.

But the sect we are now giving an account of, is of a mixt Deism, as is evident by their tenets. The founders of it, were Pontian of Hattem, and another Dutchman named Woutelaer, who, they say, added some of their own notions to the system of Spinoza, and interlarded the whole with some mystical opinions of the Pietists. This sect of Hattem still meets, but with so much privacy, that no one is admitted to their assemblies, unless he can give evident proofs of his being a trusty member of their society. This precaution is necessary to avoid the grievous penalties inflicted upon them by an edict of the states of Holland and West-Friesland, which orders, that they shall be banished or cast into prison, and severely punished as enemies to virtue, to divine worship, and disturbers of the public peace ; that their books shall be suppressed, and the authors, printers and publishers proceeded against as directed in the edict about Spinosism.

Our curious readers may find a full account of Baruch or Benedict Spinoza in Bayle's Dictionary, to which may be added his life, published by Maximilian Lucas, one of his disciples ; he was born at Amsterdam, son of a Portuguese Jew : His bold explications of scripture occasioned his being excommunicated, and cast out of the synagogue ; to avoid their persecutions, after they had obtained his banishment, he retired to Rhynsburch, then to Voorburgh, and lastly to the Hague, where he died. Lucas praises much his morals, as to his forgiving injuries, outward neatness, and disinterestedness.

He seems likewise, by a conversation which Lucas relates, to have been of opinion, that God

had a body, and that there are no substances merely spiritual.

Pontian of Hattem had been a minister of Zealand, in the foggy air of which country he invented the system afterwards published by his disciple Woutelaer, who lived at Amsterdam beyond the age of thirty-four, and vented his doctrine whilst he sold linen. In the clandestine assemblies which he held, he entertained his audience with the following unintelligible paradoxes.

1. Every criminal thought, word, or action, is the effect of sin ; sin is a privation of God, of soul, of life, it is the death of the soul ; whoever is sorry for a bad thought or desire, is not sorry that he is a sinner, but that his sins are discovered, and that God has made him know the state in which he is.

2. Owning criminal thoughts, words, or actions, is not a confession of sins ; on the contrary, it is a denial of being a sinner, since it is a denial of being dead ; for to be dead and to be a sinner is one and the same thing.

3. All sinners are equally dead, being all equally sinners ; sin may shew itself in one more than another ; but it is essential to man, whoever is a sinner this day, shall not be more so tomorrow : the action of man is not to be called sin, that appellation belongs only to his state of death.

4. Actions therefore do not make the sinner ; but they are sins only, because he was a sinner first ; sin is the death of man, the actions are only his corruption, such corruption as manifests itself when bodies are naturally dead.

5. Works, good or bad, do not change a man ; they only shew whether he be good or bad, as fruits change not the tree.

6. God is immutable, and suffers no change in regard to us, not even by our most criminal actions. " He is not angry at man because he has sinned, but man sinned because God was angry with him." Satan says, " Man has sinned, let him be punished." God says, " Man is a sinner, that is, he is dead, I must raise him to life." No man can be pleasing to God, till after his renunciation.

7. From thence he concludes, that they who condemn their brethren are like the devil, and those who are merciful to them resemble God. Man is dead by sin, actions which are bad are the corruption flowing essentially from death : to be angry at bad actions is as extravagant, as to be angry at a dead corpse for stinking.

8. He calls Christ Peacemaker. It is foolish to enquire what faith a man professes ; there is but one faith. " Whoever thinks himself just is quiet, he rests, and works no more ; his repose is the effect of his faith. Those who do not enjoy rest, and go on with works, and do not think themselves just yet, but endeavour it, those divide themselves into sects, as Catholics, Mennonites, Socinians, Arminians, &c. they even belong to religions entirely opposite to Christianity, as Judaism, Mahometanism, and Paganism ; yet all these divisions make no difference among them ; they are all alike, says Hattem, they condemn Christ, crucify him over again, and make him a liar and an impostor."

9. Three persons are one God ; who denies one, denies



denies all three. Jews, Mahometans, and Socinians deny the son, who is the second person of the trinity; therefore they reject God, therefore they are Atheists. Catholics, Mennonites and Arminians are Atheists, says Hattem, because they are not at rest in quiet, but take pains to give God glory, and to do his will.

10. God alone can do his own will, man worships him and does his will only passively, by receiving his impressions, &c. Then all religion is only passive.

11. Whoever pretends to any other but this passive religion is an Atheist, by calling the will of God any other will but that of the creator.

12. All those who believe that God has within himself a law which men are required by God and obliged to fulfil, are Atheists and Idolators; because all religion consisting in this being passive, it must be a wild and vain imagination, to pretend that religious worship consists in obeying laws, supposed to flow from God.

13. Then he concludes no one can believe in God, unless he is insensible, immoveable, and has no desires.

14. They have no faith in God, who are displeased at any thing that happens; who are not satisfied either with their own conduct, or that of others; who think they can do more, be more holy and happy, and enjoy a more desirable state.

15. So that whoever desires to be any thing else than what he is, does not believe in God, even though he should wish a sick person to recover, or a drunkard to leave off drunkenness: censures and punishments, repentance, desires and endeavours of amendment are useless; men by such sentiments resist the will of God, and become inflexible to it, and consequently are without true faith and Atheists.

16. This indifference ought, according to Hattem, to make a true faithful equally satisfied whether virtue or vice is predominant in himself or others; passiveness and quiet will be his only virtues, these will keep him even from knowing evil, and render him pleasing to God the creator, whom by the first article of the creed we are to believe.

17. The actions of men are their fruits, and are such as those who do them: good fruits cannot be expected from bad trees, men are essentially bad; it is therefore a wicked opposition to the will of God, to require good fruits, good actions, from men.

18. The son is the word of God and his wisdom, our prophet and doctor, &c. all the expressions of scripture teach us, that believing in him consists in receiving his testimony as infallible. Now the testimony of the Son of God is that the will of God is not in precepts, that our actions are not the obedience we owe him: we obey by faith, and the will of God is his eternal decree. We are neither better nor worse by our actions.

19. The corruption of man is according to God's will, man is naturally dead, naturally wicked, naturally damned, &c. yet our works are the works of the son of God, by which we know we are sinners, dead, without soul, without God, in a word perfect atheists, &c.

20. But a true Faithful is not sorry for his sins, he owns them, humbles himself in the sight of

God, acknowledges that he is dead, and that as such he can only spread infection, (commit sins) and this is all the repentance and confession required. So says Hattem; and adds "That no one believes in the Son of God, but owns that he rejects the divinity; to own a God is to deny that one is dead." Who can understand this nonsense? and what dreadful consequences flow from such principles?

21. The love of God and our neighbour does not consist in actions. This would be a denial of God's justice; and prove only as a disguise of our hating the Supreme Being.

22. The love of God consists in faith, and that is shewed by being pleased with the punishments he inflicts, and those are our bad actions. Probably Hattem himself did not understand his own expressions.

23. The Faithful alone are filled, glad, and content, &c. All is the work of God; therefore every thing pleases them: they are always perfect, because they are such as God thought fit they should be. Their works are their punishment, they own it and thus are justified: they alone are the regenerate children of God, his heirs, and are intimately united to him by the most tender affection; which Hattem and most Mystics express after the model of Solomon's Canticle by the most endearing words employed in love affairs.

These are the chief tenets of Hattem, a strange jumble of Quietism and other heresies, with which, no doubt, our readers are sufficiently tired: These sectaries were accused of Atheism and libertinism, and no wonder; they supposed every body else to be Atheists, and by retaliation the same was objected to them: again, it was reported that they enlisted men in the devil's name, and made them swallow, in a glass of wine, a paper with the word devil wrote upon it; that their teachers were wizards, and used conjurations, which calumnies, if we believe this their apologist, had the desired success in reducing the Hattemites to fly their country, or to abscond. We must not omit letting our readers know that Pontian of Hattem had frequented the Cocceian schools.

Some pretended wits who have lately renewed in Holland the system of the soul of the world, and the eternity of both, might with justice be reckoned Spinofists and Deists more than Hattem. One of them indeed pretends to be far from a Spinofist, by establishing some difference betwixt God and nature. The same writer maintains also, that the Trinity is only three modifications of the supreme Being; that extension is essential to God, and is the second person; that creation is from all eternity, &c. He and some others, namely one Deurhof, have had some followers, and held, as they do still, some assemblies, in a very private manner, to avoid the persecutions which the magistrates might make against them.

The antient and modern wits have always endeavoured to bring into contempt the religions settled in every country; but never thought fit to break society upon that account with the rest of mankind. And after all their arguments, have been forced at last to own the necessity of some religion, not only to keep men in awe, and out of fear, but because they were convinced of the being of a God.



a God by dint of demonstration; when forced so far, they have denied revelation, yet could not avoid acknowledging that God might reveal himself by some means or other, that being so much above our reach of understanding, his authority must overcome all objections; thus these libertines, Deists, pretended wits, with their bold inquiries, are reduced to own the weakness of their boasted reasonings, and to humble themselves under the powerful hand of God.

They ought likewise to be reckoned Deists, who believe that all religions are equally agreeable to God, provided they are not opposite to the laws of nature. God they say loves variety in religious worship; but if he has revealed any religion, that only can be agreeable which he has prescribed; and how can man know, without revelation, what exterior worship is acceptable to the supreme Being? They also must be deemed Deists, who, as Toland and Woolston, under pretence of crying down superstition, have attacked religion itself, as being loaded with antient errors, antient frauds, antient lies, which by length of time have been taken for truths, and which the old heathenish Romans highly prized; and I wish, says Toland, I might not be forced to say that Christians do likewise. Superstition is no doubt a great evil, fables and stories have brought religion into disrepute, and cannot be countenanced by any rational man, unless actuated by avarice, ambition, ignorance, or an over-credulous fear: We must then conclude, that a truly religious man renders to God what is due to him, submits himself, and the whole extent of reason, to his infallible word; adores him in spirit and truth; loves him, without servile fear, out of gratitude, and duty; expects all good from his bountiful hand; despises the terrors of death; and rejects all false notions of an inexorable fate.

We come now to consider the present state of Deism in Europe, with its causes and consequences.

In Italy almost all the learned are Deists, except the clergy, whose interest it is to be otherwise. The Italian Deists are however arrant hypocrites, for they conceal their real sentiments while at home, and go regularly to confession and mass. However, when any of them come into Protestant countries, they pull off the mask, and condemn the whole of Christianity.

In France they are more numerous than in Italy, and many of them have written considerable works, but then it must be remembered, that they get their works printed in Holland. There is not, that we know of, one polite French author in the present age but is a Deist; and we are sorry to add, that the worst of their books are translated into our language, and many of them have been recommended by a noble lord, more celebrated for what is vulgarly called wit, than for either

virtue or piety. Some of these books have been brought into our schools, and the youth of both sexes have greedily drank the deadly poison. What is here said, the author knows to be true, for going one day to visit a young person to whom he was guardian, he heard the dancing-master recommend some of these deistical books. Fired with indignation, he threatened to take the person under his care, together with five more, away from the school, which had such a good effect, that the books never made their appearance.

As for the causes which promote Deism in Roman Catholic countries, we shall now consider them, because they differ much from what is attended with the same effects among Protestants. And here we are extremely happy in being assisted by the German traveller Keyser.

Every one knows, says Mr. Keyser, that no books in defence of the Protestant religion, are permitted to be sold in Roman Catholic countries. Now as these men of learning read the Bible\* in the original, and as they are well acquainted with the fathers and church history, so they are convinced that the Romish church at present, has no connection with what it was at the time of the emperor Constantine the Great. Under these circumstances they have no Protestants to converse with, nor have they an opportunity of perusing such elaborate treatises as have been written against the pope and church of Rome.

Thus left in the dark, the poison sinks deep into their minds; their prejudices become strong, and although they dare not openly mock the priests and their trumpery, yet they secretly despise them, and in their writings let loose against them all the effusions of wit, and the virulence of satire. In vain are these men referred to the writings of Protestants, when they come into countries where they can be procured. These prejudices have sunk too deep, they shut the eyes of their understanding, and unfortunately it happens, that most of our controversial writings are not the most engaging. This is undoubtedly much to be lamented, but we have many things to lament that cannot easily be remedied. Such are the causes which promote Deism in the Roman Catholic countries, and let us now see what are the effects.

A disregard for Divine revelation first leads to a settled levity of temper, and that levity gradually carries on the person to pay but little regard to moral duties, although they profess themselves to be professors of natural religion. They loath every thing that is serious, because they have found the Romish priests to be erroneous. They have not that strength of mind to consider that the truth is not lost, though many imposters have done all in their power to darken it. Devotion is considered with them as a trifle, and their conduct, as well as their conversation, poisons the rising generation.

\* In this place we must beg leave to recommend to our readers a Work lately published, which we believe to be the most literal and correct translation of the Holy Scriptures now extant. We have extracted the following general account of it from the title-page, &c. and heartily recommend the Work itself to every Christian family:

FAMILY BIBLE; The cheapest ever offered to the Public: Elegantly printed in a large folio volume, embellished with capital engravings, esteemed the most uniform and elegant set of Copper-plates ever given with a Work of the kind, price 1l. 16s. handsomely bound:

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Let us now consider the state of Deism in our country, with its causes and consequences.

The first Deistical writer that ever appeared in England, was lord Herbert of Cherbury, a great statesman, and brother to the pious George Herbert, author of the Divine Poems. This learned nobleman, in his early youth, contracted the most inveterate prejudices against the Christian religion, and the cause seems to have been the following. When his lordship was a young man at the university of Oxford, he saw many melancholy instances of the abuse of clerical power, in the bishops of the established church persecuting the Puritans.. He knew that this was contrary to the spirit of the gospel, and here was the rock upon which he split. Had he considered things in a calm, dispassionate manner, he would have been led to believe that the unworthy conduct of corrupt priests should never injure the cause of Christianity; on the contrary, it seems rather to establish it, for if there was no truth in Christianity, why so many impostors from time to time, attempting to impose, under that sacred name, upon mankind?

His sentiments, however, took the wrong bias, and he considered the whole of Christianity as a cheat, and yet this nobleman was one of the most arrant enthusiasts in the world.

The next deistical writer was the famous Hobbs of Malmesbury, who opposed Christianity in consequence of having read some treatises written on absolute predestination. He said, that if God had appointed all things, consequently mankind laboured under an invincible necessity. In this instance, perhaps, Hobbs was not a fool, at least he acted consistent with the nature of the principles laid down by the Predestinarians; and we will venture to affirm, that no man can believe that doctrine, without admitting of a necessity. And if a necessity is once admitted, then there is an end of all exhortation, because the freedom of the human will is destroyed.

But the most striking case we shall mention is that of lord Bolingbroke, and we may venture to affirm, that it applies to almost all the cases in Deism during the present age.

Bolingbroke had been brought up in the house of his grandfather, sir Henry St. John, who was lord keeper of the great seal under Oliver Cromwell. The young man was of a lively disposition, but there were seldom less than thirty dissenting ministers at his grandfather's table every day.

The young man saw into the duplicity of some of these, he became tired of their insignificant exhortations and more than mock prayers. He imagined that the Presbyterian ministers visited his grandfather with no other view besides that of filling their pockets and their bellies, while their poor at home were not considered. And is this Christianity said he? then let me be a Heathen. We are sorry to say that his lordship was as good as his word; for he had no sooner completed his studies, than he undertook to publish a work in order to prove the falsity of the Mosaical history. It is certain, that his lordship's treatise on that subject is one of the most feeble in argument that ever yet was attempted. That celebrated deist Voltaire, with all his errors, was

sensible of what is here advanced, and therefore in his philosophy of history he has recourse to another way of argument.

Bolingbroke was gross in his attacks, merely because he had detected some hypocritical ministers; but Voltaire was sly and artful, because he knew that the only way to undermine the Christian system was to act in a double, concealed manner. This naturally leads us to consider the concluding part of the argument, by pointing out those modern practices which promote Deism in the present age.

It may seem perhaps strange to those who have not given themselves much trouble to think, that men, who have had the advantages of a liberal education, who have investigated every part of civil and ecclesiastical history, who know the tempers and dispositions of men, who are not in the least unacquainted with those evidences which support divine revelation; we say, it may seem strange, that such men should reject the Christian system. But there are causes, which although little understood, yet really exist.

And first, the conduct of many of our clergy contributes towards promoting Deism. The cold and indifferent manner in which they perform their duty, the little regard they pay to the pastoral care, and above all, their avaricious dispositions open the mouths of blasphemers, and induce them boldly to tell the clergy, that if they were not impostors, they would act in the same manner as they taught.

Again, in the second place, the wicked lives of those who make pretensions to high attainments in religion, serve much towards the promoting of Deism. The Deists have learned what is asserted in the New Testament, namely, that every Christian is a new creature. Now as these high pretenders to religion are so far from being better in their conversation than they were before they assumed this new character, consequently they tell them that their religion is no more than a system of imposition; for, say they, unless religion serves to make us better than we were before, where is the necessity for a change? Here the Deists do not consider that all mere pretenders to religious attainments, have no religion at all; whereas, the life of the real Christian is hid with Christ in God. They should consider the tendency of religion, and not the conduct of its corrupt professors. Let them say, is it of divine original? then let me embrace it, although I shall be obliged to sit down in this world with hypocrites, and be ranked among many thousands of those, who, professing the name of Christ, would put him to death were he to come in the flesh a second time, as the Jews of old did.

Thirdly, as there is not a single crime that can disgrace human nature, but has been committed by those men who are called religious, so our poor, unthinking, young gentlemen, who have received a good education, look upon the whole Christian religion as a cheat. The consequences flowing from all these baneful principles are many, but we shall only take notice of a few.

First, as men are led to consider religion with



contempt, so they pay little regard to moral duties; and we have thousands of Deists amongst us, who know not the meaning of the word. To despise religion is no new thing, for ever since man lost his original righteousness, he has had a stronger desire to evil than to good. Strange contradiction in human nature, to prefer misery to happiness; for men to set their own knowledge up as superior to that of God.

A second consequence is, that men neglect, in general, all those duties they owe to their families; why should a man labour in this world who has no hopes in death. The believer looks upon himself as an accountable being; the Deist, notwithstanding his pretensions to a belief of a future state of rewards and punishments, dies without hope; not giving himself an opportunity to enquire, or time to consider things in a proper manner. He forms his notions of Christianity not from the religion itself, but from the wicked lives of corrupt professors.

A serious enquirer after truth would never seek for information but at the fountain head. He would go to the sacred Scriptures; and having examined the evidences which support them, he would rest satisfied, and leave false professors to answer to God. We shall conclude this article concerning the Deists, in the words of the late pious and learned lord president Forbes, a gentleman who saw deeply into human nature, and who defeated the Deists with weapons they were unacquainted with.

"Atheism, Deism, and the whole train of opinions that attend what is commonly called Free-thinking, flow from a settled disbelief and contempt of revelation.

This belief is, in a great measure, owing to the want of a fair and unprejudiced examination of the numerous and various proofs and evidences, that support the truth and authority of the scriptures.

But it is chiefly grounded on a firm persuasion, that human understanding is a sufficient guide to man, and the test and measure of all matters of belief; so that we are at liberty, nay indeed bound, to reject whatever does not answer those notions, which, by what we call reasoning, we have fixed.

That modern discoveries, the fruit of genius and application only, have fixed and determined to a certainty the laws and causes of the principal operations, and phenomena of nature, which were wholly unknown to the ancients, and mistaken by the authors of the books which are received as revelation.

That therefore these books, so far as they give accounts of nature, contrary to experience, and demonstration resulting from it, are false; and consequently can, in no other point, pass for infallible.

That the scriptures relate a great many marvellous, improbable, nay incredible transactions, which do not seem to be directed to any purpose, suited to sovereign wisdom and goodness; and to contain a world of institutions, laws, observances, and ceremonies, which to Freethinkers appear absurd, frivolous, and ridiculous; unworthy the supposed author, and improper to attain the proposed end.

When any apparent mistake in natural philosophy is objected to the scriptures, the answer commonly given is, in my opinion, stronger than the objection, according to the views of the disputants on either side; that these things, being incidental only, are spoken *ad captum humanum*, and accommodated to the understandings of those, to whom they were only delivered; though, I confess, it would be a much more comfortable answer, if it could be said, and proved, that the things objected to are true.

When Freethinkers ground themselves upon any improbable, or, as they will call it, incredible or absurd relation, there is no answering them without bringing together, and laying before them, the whole evidence that serves for supporting revelation; which, when poised in the scale against all objections of this kind that ever have been made, in my opinion, may certainly outweigh them; but, the misfortune is, the objection glares, can be taken in by a very moderate capacity, and requires no learning, and but little attention to comprehend it; whereas, without long study, great learning, close attention, and a dispassionate and unprejudiced examination, the evidence for revelation cannot be collected and weighed. Whoever therefore lets in the strength of the objection, and, for want of learning or attention, not to speak of natural prejudices, either cannot, or will not give himself the trouble to collect and weigh the proofs on the other side, must necessarily give it against revelation, and fortify himself in his incredulity.

And to this it is owing that all those, who, in this indolent and luxurious age, pretend to politeness, and aim at knowledge, and the reputation of understanding and science, without any interruption to their pleasures or pursuits, take up with objections against revelation, without the painful examination of the evidence that supports it, look down with contempt on believers, as a parcel of prejudiced enthusiasts, and insist themselves with Freethinkers, as the honestest, wisest set of men living.

And when men, carried by pleasures, or sunk in indolence, settle once upon these notions, every institution, ordinance, or ceremony, appointed in scripture, for which Christians cannot, or do not, assign an adequate use or end, becomes fresh matter of objection, and tends to rivet and confirm infidelity.

This facility of receiving and taking up with objections, and the criminal indolence and neglect of those who do not give themselves the trouble to examine, with due care, the merits of the answer, has been long complained of, and lamented by all who wish well to mankind, but hitherto in vain: something more than argument must intervene to cool them in the pursuit of pleasures, to rouse their attention to their real interest, and to determine them to search with care and industry, before they will let in so much as a suspicion that their objections are ill-founded; or those objections must be overthrown by some other and shorter mean than the complicated evidence for the authority of revelation, else the objectors will never give themselves the trouble to discover their mistakes."



To what has been here advanced concerning the Deists, we must add, that they have for some years had a chapel at Mary-le-Bone, where we can only say, that the discourses delivered are far below Heathenism. We take up

the writings of a Seneca and an Epictetus, &c. with pleasure, and we can find no fault with them because they knew no better, but we lament to find men living under the gospel advancing notions subversive of it.

## A C C O U N T of the P H I L A D E L P H I A N S.

**T**HERE is not in the whole world, either a trade or a profession, whether civil or religious, but engrossers will be found among them. We have popular physicians, popular lawyers, and popular divines, all of whom may be considered as engrossers. But here we have an instance of one single sect engrossing, as it were, to itself a title claimed in common by all the rest.

Philadelphians signify Lovers of the Brethren; and it is well known, that all sects whatever love their brethren, if we may believe themselves; nay, they all acknowledge it is a duty to do so, although we know that very few of them pay any regard to it, unless they are rich; then indeed they have many friends, but to use the words of the wise man, "The poor is abhorred of his neighbour." However, let us proceed with this new religion.

The Philadelphians took their rise only a few years ago, having at their head a disaffected clergyman of the church of England. Their form of worship resembles that of the Dissenters in general; but as for their preaching, it is perhaps the most extraordinary thing in the world. But of that we shall take notice afterwards.

In the mean time, we have made ourselves perfectly acquainted with every thing belonging to these people; and so far are they from being what they call themselves, namely, Lovers of the Brethren, that, properly speaking, they have no brethren at all. This will appear the more evident, when it is considered, that they are not incorporated into one body, as most of the other sects are. Their congregation consists of all those who please to come, let them be of any denomination whatever. Indeed, there is one thing constantly expected, and that is, that they would bring some money along with them for the support of the preacher. And here it is necessary to observe, that among all the sects in this nation, we know of none who preach gratis, except the Friends and the Sandimanians. All others must have money, otherwise they can have no accommodation. Nothing is more common than to hear some of our modern sectaries condemn the conduct of Simon Magus, for offering money for the Holy Ghost, and yet we never find that they refuse to take money when they

administer their spiritual consolations; nay, they frequently demand money, and that in a too peremptory manner.

All the money collected at the Philadelphian meeting is given to the minister, who agrees to pay the rent out of it; but he generally insinuates himself so far into the good graces of his hearers, that they pay it for him.

They have no church discipline, which indeed would be altogether unnecessary, especially where there is not a church; for these Philadelphians are not a church; they are not a body collective, but their meeting is open to all comers. The people do not so much as know one another, and the minister is so sensible of this, that he frequently advertises his sermons in the public papers. The novelty of the name leads many people to the place, who generally return as uninformed as they went.

When they first made their appearance, we were led to believe that they had chosen their name from the common meaning of the word, namely, that they lived in love and friendship together, as all Christians are commanded to do. But no such thing was intended, for the minister is, with respect to church government, a Latitudinarian, that is, he does not desire to have any connection with church fellowship, but to range at large, submitting to any form that his people may chuse to prescribe.

This indeed is too much the characteristic of many modern sects. It discovers no small share of worldly wisdom, for when people enter into connections, as all churches should do, then it is generally expected that they walk by some rule and mind prescribed duties. And among these, what could be more important than that of providing for the poor. Now, in order to avoid this very disagreeable and very troublesome duty, nothing can better suit the purpose than to preach at large, without being concerned with any church whatever; for if the people will not come to hear them, and give them money, they can keep their sermons to themselves.

We come now to consider their manner of preaching, and previous thereto, we must ask our readers a few questions; for we have some reason to believe, that we have more sorts of readers than one.

And now good reader, if you are a Roman



man Catholic, there can remain no manner of doubt but you have read Dr. Chaloners Catholic Christian instructed. If you are a Lutheran, you must have read Dr. Rambach's treatise on the sufferings of Christ. If you are a church of England man, you must have read Haywood and Attersole; and, if a Dissenter, Keach and Mather undoubtedly grace your library. These are admirable writings in their own way, and we are certain they have their admirers. But now reader, we will lead thee within the veil, and shew things unknown to thee before.

The preacher of the Philadelphian meeting, not content with what has been advanced by the writers already mentioned, has improved the notions of all those who have gone before him. The fundamental principles upon which his religion is founded, are the following.

First, that there was an oral tradition, or unwritten law from the fall of man to the days of Moses; and that this unwritten law was what the patriarchs adhered to.

Secondly, that the delivery of the law to Moses, was nothing but a re-publication of the old oral law, and that there was no difference between the service of the tabernacle and the worship performed by the patriarchs.

Lastly, that there were so many mysteries contained under the Levitical ceremonies, that if people would carefully attend to them, they would find every thing in the gospel concealed under them. Thus for instance, the crossing the Red-sea, points out conversion; the journey through the wilderness, human life; the crossing of Jordan, death; and taking possession of the holy land; everlasting happiness. But these are trifles to what we are going to relate.

The Philadelphian minister sees wonders in the founding of the rams horns, in the new moons, in all the washings of the priests, in the turtle doves and young pigeons, in clean and unclean beasts, and a thousand other things too numerous to mention. This allegorical interpretation of scripture has however a strong effect on the intellects of weak people. And here it is surprising to consider, in what manner we poor bewildered creatures form our notions of religion on many occasions.

Thus we are not content with common explanations of the obvious sense of scripture, but we must have recourse to far-fetched allegories and hidden mysteries. However, the ceremonies were in part a type of the gospel, yet divine wisdom had something else in view, in prescribing them; namely, to keep the Jews a distinct people from the Heathens around them. Nay, in some cases there was a physical necessity in it.

Such was the state of the country, such was the effect of the climate, that had they been permitted to eat swine's flesh, it might have proved fatal and prejudicial to their health.

It was the same with blood, which they were prohibited from eating, because it filled the body with corrupt particles. Some of the types indeed were significant; but we are of opinion that a single allusion to them, in a sermon occasionally, is enough. To dwell half an hour or an hour upon them, is to prevent the preacher from making practical improvements. It leads the people into all that wildness which is calculated to seduce their minds from the truth, and makes them believe they see wonders where none ever existed.

It is allowed, that in private meditation, allegory is delightful, and it may even serve to kindle devotion in the heart; but those things should be kept within proper bounds. There are many things that we may know, that ought not to be made public. We ought to be extremely cautious in all things of that nature, and therefore let our words be few.

We shall conclude our account of these people by observing, that as they are not properly a community, so there is reason to believe, they will die away with the present generation. We have, in the course of this work, said so much concerning new religions, that we shall not here re-assume the subject. If a general toleration of all religious sentiments has increased in this country the number of new religions, we must acknowledge that these new religions have soon fallen into decay. And here we cannot help remembering the words of the wise doctor Gamalial; "Let all new religions alone; for if they are of men, they will vanish away to nothing; but if they are of God, they will flourish and be established."

When the toleration act first took place, there were but few sects among the Dissenters in England, but they increased amazingly soon after. The reason is obvious. Before the revolution they had no opportunity of planning schemes for new religions; but no sooner did that desirable event take place, than they all set up for themselves on separate foundations. And yet although some of these were greedily embraced at first, yet many of them are now sunk into oblivion, and probably more will soon follow their example. This much is certain, that the people of the present age have become, as it were, tired of new religions. They have made experiments, and they have cut their fingers. In other words, they have been misled, and they are determined to be on their guard for the future.



## ACCOUNT of the BOHEMIAN BRETHREN, who are commonly called GYPSIES.

**T**HIS sort of people being the dregs and sink of all nations, our readers may wonder to see them placed among fanatics and enthusiasts: yet we are obliged to give an account of them, by reason of their origin, which has some remarkable particulars in it. We give them the appellation of Bohemians, but the Germans call them Zigenners, from which the Italians name them Cingares. Borel informs us, that Boem, in the old language of the Gauls, signifies bewitched, which seems to agree with the notion of common people, that they can foretel what is to happen, discover hidden things, and are well versed in witchcraft. They go from place to place, having no fixed abode, as the ancient Germans did, and, in the North, the Druidesses, the Sybils, the Voles and Fairies, so often mentioned by the old Gauls. Their first rise seems owing to the remains of the Druids, who were brought into so much contempt by Christianity, that having lost all credit and power in the towns and cities, they were obliged to dwell in caves, and to wander about the country. Beggars and vagrants are apt to associate together, which renders it probable, that others from Africa and Asia may have joined themselves to those Druids; for instance, the Kaulits of Persia, who, like our Bohemians, run about the country, live in solitary places, and have no religion or public worship, or rules, or any laws: They swarm over all Persia, and from thence spread southward to Arabia and Egypt, northward to Tartary, and more distant places. Accordingly they are called Gypsies, upon the same account for which the Saxons call them Tartars. Our over-credulous ancestors vainly imagined, that those Gypsies or Bohemians were so many spies for the Turks, and that in order to expiate for the crimes which they had committed in their own country, they were condemned to steal from and rob the Christians. A rare penance! We have performed such another, though in a nobler and more heroical manner, by taking the cross, and making war against those Infidels. But our opinion, that the Bohemians come from the southern parts of Asia and Africa, which our forefathers did not distinguish from Egypt, before the way of going to the East-Indies by the Cape of Good Hope was found out, is grounded on the testimony of one of the most ancient authors who wrote concerning them. He relates, "that in 1433, the Ciganes, who pretended they were Egyptians, came into Germany;" and according to another writer cited by Pasquier, they likewise came into France much about the

same time. The story is somewhat curious: "They were, says that author, by extraction, of the lower Egypt; and having abjured the Christian faith, were drove from their native country, became miserable, and an abomination to all mankind: the then emperor rejected them also, as other Christian powers had done, and told them they should go to the holy father at Rome. They went, confessed their sins, and he enjoined them to go and travel about the world, doing penance, not lying in a bed, &c. This they performed for five years before they came to Paris; the chief of them arrived there on the seventeenth of August 1427, the rest on the day of the decollation of St. John." The same writer says, that the ears of all of them were bored through, and had a ring, sometimes two, at each ear; their complexion was very black, and their hair frizzled; the women also very black and ugly, and their hair like a horse's tail. The habit of these women was of old coarse flax; some of them were witches, and looked into peoples hands to tell them their fortunes. In a word, these Egyptians, banished apostates, despised by all mankind, and condemned by the pope to a wandering life, bear a vast resemblance to our Bohemians. After all, the said author cited by Pasquier says, the pope did excommunicate them, and all those who had their fortunes told to them, and that from Paris they went to Potoise, on Lady-day in September, 1428.

We are inclined to trace the origin of the Bohemians still higher than those Egyptians; the ancient Druids, the Kaulits of Persia, or the Uxians of Armenia: Why may they not owe their rise to the Messalians, wandering and dispersed in Thracia, Bulgaria, &c. who were mistaken for sectaries and Heretics of divers kinds, under the name of Manichæans, and upon whom the compilers of Heretical catalogues have liberally bestowed a great number of odious appellations; by which, in process of time, they became more black and hateful to orthodox Christians, than the very devils in hell. The Messalians are supposed to have had their beginning under the reign of the emperor Constantius: They were but few at first, their number increased gradually, and when they were taken notice of, as the writers of the fourth age charged them with most of the Manichæan principles, they were reckoned amongst those Heretics. The first penal laws against Schismatics and Heretics were enacted at that time, and put in execution against the Messalians, who being prosecuted, from Pagans and idolators, as they



were thought to be rather than Christians, became most orthodox Christians out of fear or self-interest.

As the Messalians are mentioned here only as bearing some resemblance to the Bohemians, we shall only relate what may evidence their conformity of sentiments and practice. They did not work, and lived by the alms which they received, to imitate the apostles whom Christ had forbid having any possession. This constant idleness, their voluntary poverty, their contempt of all the conveniencies of life, and of all government, could not but lead them by degrees into a total neglect of discipline, and of all laws: This occasioned great crimes and disorders in their society; and among the sincere Messalians, many others crept in who minded nothing less than their prayers. They were therefore accused both of living together without observing any order, any rule, or even the most common decency, and of being true Cynics, who after wandering all day in the fields, met at night, and lay in the same place, without any regard to age, sex, &c. The orthodox moreover charged them with maintaining that we ought always to follow the dictates of nature, to eat, to drink, to ease one's self when it requires it, and that no fast is to be observed, but when necessary for the preservation or recovery of health. Besides all this, the orthodox of those days reproached them with their meetings and nocturnal feasts, in which the Pagans had heretofore taxed the Christians, and which have since been laid to the charge of other modern Heretics, to render them more odious to the Roman Catholics.

We find in Italy, about the close of the thirteenth century, some Fraticelli, who were also called Bizoqui, that is, bigots or clownish, upon account of their unpolished way of life, or because they pretended to a greater and more refined devotion. The other name of Fraticelli, that is, little brothers, either was given them because the first of them were monks, or rather it is the same as the name of Adelphian, which was bestowed upon the Messalians: We shall soon see that there was some conformity of sentiments betwixt them: Their chief doctors were Pietro Maurato and Pietro di Fossombrone: but an apostate monk from the convent of Pongilupi, was their ringleader; at least it is so reported. Be that as it will, these Fraticelli wandered about the country like the Messalians, to avoid the persecutions raised against them, upon account of their lewd life, and of the errors which they held, the necessary consequence whereof was their shocking disorderly behaviour. Both the Fraticelli and Messalians pretended that all goods ought to be in common, and condemned living by the work of ones hands. They denied all obedience to magistrates, allowed a plurality of wives, and those to be in common: to which the Grecian and Italian orthodox added the heinous imputation of holding their meetings in the night, to be more at liberty to commit all sorts of crimes. We have informed our readers that some ringleaders of the fanatical Baptists, and several of their followers, were guilty of those three capital errors: which may serve both as an indirect proof that the Fraticelli and Messalians

probably might not be accused without some grounds; and, by consequence, as a justification of the severities used against them. But, after all, it must be owned, that some particular persons might live and die in that sect, without being acquainted with the bad principles of their evil tendency, as but too many do even amongst the orthodox; and though Heresies ought to be detested, certainly the inveterate hatred against the persons is highly to be avoided.

But to return to our Messalians of Greece and of the East, and to our Italian Fraticelli: If there were amongst them so many professed libertines, as the historians and controvertists of those times mention, ignorance, joined to the persecutions raised against them, may have been the occasion of their actually putting in execution all the enormities of their false doctrine. A young person, for instance, commits a crime, and by that infamous action loses his reputation; he is despised, abandoned by every one; so out of despair runs headlong into ruin and misery. This example needs no further comment.

We must likewise take notice here, that both ancient and modern controvertists have often represented sects and heretical systems as more dangerous than they appear to have really been. Some may pretend to excuse this fault under colour of an unbounded zeal against Heresy; but zeal ought not to be bitter, or to destroy charity; and whilst a fiery and subtle controvertist inveighs too harshly against the venom of an erroneous opinion, he often does more mischief to public society, than the very person who had taken it up without much consideration, and probably might as easily have dropped it, if pride and shame had not, such is human frailty! prompted him to maintain it with obstinacy. This same false zeal has often made the said writers tax one and the said sect with maintaining inconsistent and evidently contradictory opinions; it cannot be denied that iniquity belies itself; scripture says it, and we daily experience it. But that so many inconsistent propositions should so often be justly charged upon one and the same sect, is not very much to be credited. The authors of those imputations have been sensible of this defect in the accounts by them given; and instead of owning honestly their mistake, have invented new names of derision and contempt, to upbraid the sects which they had accused wrongfully of such palpable contradictions: Thus the Manichæans, the Messalians, &c. were called by a name which in Greek signifies a mixture of all sorts: Thus the Albigenses, the Waldenses, the Lutherans and Calvinists, have been nicknamed, the sink and dregs of all prior Heretics.

The name of Adelphians, bestowed on the Messalians, was taken from Adelphius, one of their teachers: Flavian, patriarch of Antioch, having with great art inveigled him to discover the most secret articles of the doctrine which he held and taught, obtained that he should be banished from Syria.

But to conclude our account of those sectaries; by wandering about, they in process of time went further and further from the place of their origin. The persecutions they suffered, and



and ill treatment they received from the Catholics, as we have said before, had as great a share in banishing them from cities and great towns, and rendering them odious, as their erroneous opinions and wicked life. As they spread, so did their doctrine; and it is highly probable, that in Europe as well as in Asia, they met many libertines who gladly associated themselves with them, upon account of the idle and lazy life, so much recommended by that sect. Tares soon grow amongst the good corn, and the common people, who are apt to form their judgment not from particular instances but general conclusions, easily mistook the good corn for tares. Thus they settled in Greece, in Thracia, Bulgaria, Transylvania, Hungary, and at last in Bohemia. In all the countries where the Slavonian language is understood, the Messalians took, or their enemies in derision, gave them, the name of Bogomiles.

Their abode in Bulgaria and the neighbouring countries, has rendered the word Bulgare odious throughout Europe, chiefly in France

and Italy. It may likewise be presumed, that they went from Bulgaria and Hungary into Bohemia, at a time when the Bohemians began to rebel against the church, and upon that account the orthodox took the Bohemians to be the same as the Bogomiles or Messalians. This being also a critical time for the church of Christ, and many beggars and miserable wretches taking part in these divisions, all were blended under the same denomination. Thus at last the name of Bohemians is universally given to vagrants and runaways, who have no settled notions, laws or religion, who in well-governed kingdoms are banished from all cities or towns, and dwell in caves and solitary places, and live only by begging or stealing. If the romantic stories, mentioned in the public gazettes concerning some of those Bohemians, who within a few years have made inroads through high and low Germany, were of any authority or to be credited, the proofs of courage which they are said to give, must appear very singular and strange.

## HISTORY of the BRETHREN of the ROSY-CROSS.

**T**HIS society took its rise in Germany. About the year 1394, a young man, who from five years old had been brought up in a convent, became acquainted at the age of sixteen with some magicians, learned their art, travelled into the East as far as Arabia, where the doctors of that country taught him wonderful secrets, and foretold him he should be the author of a general reformation. From Arabia he went into Barbary, and from thence to Spain, where he frequented the Moors and Jews who were versed in the Cabala. He there pretended to begin his reformation; but being banished from Spain, he came back into his native country Germany, and died in the year 1484, being one hundred and six years old. His body was not buried, but only deposited in a grotto. Fate or some oracle had ordered that the corps should remain in that state one hundred and twenty years; in consequence of which decree, it was not found out till 1604.

A German chronicle of the Rosicrucians relates this discovery as follows: A Rosicrucian being probably more cunning than his brethren, took notice of a stone with a nail in it: He took out the stone, and found the grotto in which was deposited the body of their founder, with this inscription, "At the end of one hundred and twenty years I shall be manifested." Over the monument, after these four letters A. C. R. C.

these words were written, "In my life-time I have chosen this compendium of the world for my tomb," and several hieroglyphical figures about them. The body held in its hand a book in gold letters, which contained the praises of the founder, and gave an account of the vast treasures he had found, and of his dying without sickness or pain when aged above an hundred.

This discovery occasioned the establishment of the Brethren of the Rosy-Cross; and in 1615, a German printed and published their apology and profession of faith.

At first the number of the Brethren was four only, then eight; but it increased very much afterwards. They were to remain in a state of celibacy, and to make themselves known to the world by no other name than the Enlightened of the Rosy-Cross. Their laws and rules forbade them to receive any reward for practising physic, and ordered them to do it out of charity; to do good to all mankind; to apply themselves to wisdom and piety; to reform the religious worship, by retrenching all superfluous ceremonies; to maintain steadily all the principles of the confraternity, which was to subsist to the end of the world. Their chief customs and opinions were, to dress according to the fashion of the country in which they lived; to be present at least once a year at their meetings, or to give a good reason for absenting; to wear constantly the character or impression



impression of the Rosy-Cross, as a token of the Brotherhood; to look upon themselves as appointed to reform all things, and as having the whole and sole right to all the gifts of nature, upon that account. They were to declare openly, that the pope was Antichrist, and that a time would come when they should pull down his triple crown. They rejected and condemned the doctrines of the pope and of Mahomet, calling the one and the other blasphemies of the East and West: they owned but two sacraments, and admitted only the ceremonies of the primitive church. They called their society the Confraternity of the Holy Ghost. They pretended to a right of naming their successors, and bequeathing to them all their privileges and virtues, as being their representatives; to know by revelation those who were worthy to be admitted as members of their society; to keep the devil in a state of subjection, and to discover hidden treasures. They moreover said, that their confraternity could not be destroyed, because God always opposed an impenetrable cloud to screen them from their enemies. Neither hunger, thirst, sickness, or any other infirmity, could hurt them; if any brother died, his burying-place and their assemblies were to be kept secret for one hundred and twenty years. They believed as a fundamental article of their faith, that if the sect failed, it might be renewed at the founder's monument or tomb. They bragged of having invented a new language, by which they could describe the nature of every being; yet they did not make use of speeches or parables; they avoided being thought the inventors of novelties, and the account they gave of their wonderful performances, was not to be deemed either imprudent, foolish, malicious, or deceitful. But their bare word must be taken, and these enlightened Brethren very much resemble quacks and alchemists in this point, as they did in their jargons and their boasted mysterious sciences: Accordingly they were all instructed, and had their education in Arabian or German schools.

Moreover, the Rosicrucians said, that another sun, which borrowed its light from the sun of this world, enlightened the grotto in which their founder was deposited, and served to discover all the wonders of the said grotto, some of which were engraved on a copper-plate placed upon an altar: where, for instance, four figures are to be seen, with these four inscriptions, "Never empty, The yoke of the law, The liberty of the gospel, The glory of God." We shall not omit other strange things, which deserve and require the learned comments of some alchemists or visionary cabalists; several of which have promised as the Brethren of the Rosy-Cross, to repair the breaches and defects of the world; as if nature was subject to decay, or the divine providence, by which it is governed, could possibly be so far weakened, as to suffer its own work to be destroyed. They likewise flatter themselves that they shall be able to restore the primitive strength of constitution, and innocence of life in mankind; plenty and community of goods, the universal knowledge of the sciences, and the general agreement of all nations, in an unity

of the gospel, in unity of religion, and holiness of life.

Morhof mentions a diminutive sect, or a small swarm of the Rosicrucians, to which he gives the name of Collegium Rosianum, or society of Rosay, who was a visionary fanatic, and endeavoured to settle that Confraternity in Savoy, near Dauphine about the year 1630. Their number was not to exceed three; one Mornius tried all possible ways of being admitted for a fourth, but was rejected; and could only obtain the favour of being reckoned as a servant. This small society was entrusted with three important secrets, perpetual motion; the art of changing metals; and an universal physic.

What can be thought of such a society; which is supposed perfect in itself, adorned with universal knowledge, possessed of all worldly treasures, exempt from all human infirmities; yet no more seen than if it had been composed of pure spirits: all we can say is, that it bears a great resemblance to, and deserves to be ranked among fairy-tales. We must own nevertheless, that the common people are delighted, and love to entertain themselves with such fooleries. So the world is like to be for ever pestered with quacks and fools.

The Rosicrucians were much talked of in France in the first fifteen or twenty years of the last age, and several who pretended to be of that society, were cast into prison. The foolish credulity of the people was raised by the following bill posted up in all public places; "We who are deputies from the Rosicrucians, and dwell visibly or invisibly in this town, by the grace of the most High---shew and teach, without books or notes, to speak all the languages of the country where we please to live, to deliver our fellow-creatures from deadly error." In 1613, a Rosicrucian of Barbary, named Muley-Ibu-Hamet, with a handful of men, having overcome the king of Fez and Morocco, was, they said, to conquer Spain. Some pretended Enlightened Brethren appeared then in Spain, but were soon quelled by the Inquisition.

Much about that time, the pretended Enlightened Brethren, before mentioned, occasioned some tumults in Spain, as the Rosicrucians had done; and we must not omit giving our readers some account of them. The singularity of their notions, some points in which they either did, or other people were resolved to believe they did agree with the Rosicrucians, made them be esteemed one and the same sect. Neither shall we pretend to multiply parties and divisions, but rank these Enlightened Brethren amongst the most dangerous kind of contemplative men, and the most wicked Quietists; if what is reported of them be true, that they believed that when the mind is wholly absorbed in prayer, and intimately united to God, it does not become guilty of any of the crimes committed in that state by the body. They moreover held, that the sacraments were useless, &c. that all good works were supplied by raising the heart to God. The Inquisition taxed them with maintaining seventy-six erroneous opinions; and this is not to be wondered at, since that tribunal is known to be very nice, and to require an extraordinary exactness



exactness in religious matters. These enlightened Brethren made their appearance about the end of the sixteenth age: but the Inquisition put an early stop to the progress of their fanaticism. They shewed themselves again in the neighbourhood of Séville, in the beginning of the seventeenth age, at which period of time they were esteemed to be Rosicrucians.

The Low Countries, and Picardy, produced likewise, about 1525, some such enlightened Brethren as those of Spain. A taylor named Quintin, and one Copin of much the same trade, were the ringleaders of the enlightened Flemish

men; for in those days, every man was thought qualified to preach. They are accused of holding, that intention alone makes sin; that the spirit of God partakes of all the actions of men, and that innocency of life consists only in being calm and easy, without giving way to any doubts or scruples. This intention, which alone makes the sin, does not differ very widely from the mind intimately united to God, whilst the body wallows in crimes: What dreadful consequences might not follow from such doctrine, in a state governed by fanatics so united to God, and so perfectly weaned from matter.

## ACCOUNT of the Modern ANTI-TRINITARIANS.

**W**E have already taken notice of the Anti-trinitarians in the primitive times of Christianity; and likewise of those among the Protestant Dissenters. We shall now proceed to give an account of another set of Arians, which have sprung up in the present age; nay indeed, not many years ago. It is well known that this vast species of Arianism, Socinianism and Deism, has induced many of the clergy to seek to be excused from subscribing to the thirty-nine articles. This was, perhaps, one of the most extraordinary efforts of madness that ever took place; for how could those men expect to enjoy pecuniary emoluments from the church, while they refused to comply with her commands. They knew that every civil establishment of religion has its system, which must be subscribed by its members, particularly the clergy. This is done in order to preserve uniformity, that they may all preach the same doctrine, and not broach new opinions.

Had these men laboured under any scruple of conscience, they would have left their livings, and either joined the Presbyterians, or set up separate meetings. But no such event took place; for they went and took possession of their livings. It is true we have two or three exceptions; particularly in the conduct of a clergyman in the north of England, who resigned his living, and was received in London by those who longed for something out of the common way.

This was a happy event to our Arian, for although, in order to point out his disinterestedness, he boasted that he had left a benefice worth three hundred a year, from motives of conscience; yet he had no objection to accept of double that sum from those who followed him in London.

A nobleman of a very popular character, became one of this preacher's first hearers in London, and his example was followed by several persons of considerable rank. As our preacher had been brought up to read prayers, and consequently could not pray without book, and as the

Common Prayer-book of the Church of England every where asserts the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, so he could not with propriety make any use of it, as it would have condemned his own principles.

To remedy this defect, he set to work and compiled a liturgy, partly out of the Common Prayer book, and partly from his own invention. This liturgy suits all the purposes for which it was intended; for it is made according to the sentiments of the Arians and Socinians.

Great care has been taken by the compiler to convince his hearers, that he does not believe in the doctrine of the trinity. In some of his collects, he blesses God for sending his son into the world to save sinners; but it may be asked, what does he mean by salvation here? The answer is neither less nor more than that Jesus, as a created being, came to shew us a good example both in his life and sufferings.

That he did so is certain, but surely this could never constitute a mediatorial office. A mediator is one who stands between the offender and offended, to reconcile the difference that has taken place. Now, according to the whole scripture account, Christ was to execute these offices for sinners.

First, he was to be unto them a prophet, to convince them of sin, and point out to them the whole will and purpose of God.

Secondly, in order to restore the honour of a broken law, and reconcile sinners to God, he was to suffer what no created being could suffer, namely, the whole wrath of God for sin. This is called his priestly office, and it was for this reason that he took upon him a human body, and a rational soul.

Thirdly, as a king, and supreme head of his church, he was, by the power of his spirit, to subdue the wills and passions of his people; he was to make them a willing people in the day of his power; he was not only to rule over them, but he was to rule in their hearts, by the Holy Ghost. To renew their nature, to fill their minds



with a desire to do good to their fellow creatures, to be cloathed with humility, and to go on from one degree of perfection to another, till such time as they arrive before the Lord in glory.

Now, what has been here advanced concerning Christ's offices, could not have been performed by a human being. Part of the prophetic office might, indeed, have been performed; but no mortal could have executed that of the priest, or the king. What human being could endure the whole wrath of God in his body and soul, for the sins of a guilty world. It was utterly impossible for any person less than God, to make an atonement. If sin was committed against an infinite being, then it must be a power equally great that could satisfy Divine justice.

But according to the notions of the modern Anti-trinitarians, there was no necessity for such an atonement, nor did Christ come to do any thing more than to shew us a good example, and to instruct us in the way of duty. Why, the apostle Paul could have done this, and so could the other apostles; for we are certain they taught the same doctrines as were taught by our saviour, and so far as we know, every one of them sealed his testimony with his blood, except St. John the Evangelist.

These Anti-trinitarians are composed of persons who have no knowledge, in general, concerning religion. Many of them are in very elevated stations in life; and they have of late built a grand meeting for their preacher, with an elegant house for his residence. And here we would observe, that any man who can strike out something new, is generally sure of success. This will, in all respects, apply to the case of religion; and for the honour of our Anti-trinitarian adventurer, he is endeavouring to make hay while the sun shines.

Thus, besides a considerable subscription from his hearers, he has as much provision, of the best sort, sent him in from different parts of the country every week, as would support several families. There are no poor belonging to his meeting, for charity and new religions seldom have much connection together. This we know to be true, and much more, though we would not be thought too censorious.

Before we conclude this account, we would willingly make one observation, and the rather, because it is new. And that is, that in most cases in religion, the vulgar enthusiastic preacher, draws after him the greatest number of followers. But these are among the lower ranks of the people.

However, let not the great and the learned, in this instance, triumph over the weak and the ignorant. The great can find as much pleasure in running after a man who is seeking every opportunity in his power to traduce the gospel of Christ, as the vulgar can in running after the ignorant teacher, who does not so much as understand what he is speaking of.

Many are carried away with a notion, that they are the elected children of God, and therefore look with contempt on the rest of mankind. On the other hand, the lukewarm in religion, who follow the preacher, who despises the glories of Christ, will not acknow-

ledge that there is any thing supernatural. In this manner they stifle the agonizing pains of a guilty conscience, and live as if there was not a God to whom they are to be accountable.

If these men were to consider the following sentiments of a great author, it might put them to the blush.

"The words trinity and persons are terms not to be met with in the sacred book, and yet to those terms, and the application of them, the revolt against the doctrine is chiefly owing.

What the scripture acquaints us with, is this, and no more: That it characterises the Father, who is the avenger of wrong, and rewarder of right, God; that what it characterises the Son, the Word, the creator of the world, the redeemer of mankind, sent for that purpose by the Father, is God; that the Holy Spirit, the correspondent with, and comforter of the spirits of men, is God; and that nevertheless the Deity, the self-existent Being, is but One. That these matters are so, the scripture expressly declares; and the manner in which it expresses the last proposition, Deut. vi. 4. is worth attending to. Our translators render it, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is our Lord. The original says, Jehovah our God is one self-existent Being; for so the word translated Lord signifies. Now, what is there in our knowledge, in our conceptions, or in our reason, that can qualify us to determine the modus of the existence, or of the action of the invisible Deity? That we have no sort of idea of the substance of that soul which acts in us, or of the manner of its existence or actions, is an agreed point: what impudence then must it be in us, to pretend to determine, from our conceptions, or rather inability to conceive, the condition, or manner of existence and acting of the supreme Being, the least of whose works are in very deed beyond our comprehension?

The ancients, less refined than we, disputed about the figure and form of the Deity; and, knowing none more perfect or noble, as they apprehended, than that of man, bestowed upon the Deity a human shape and figure. The impropriety of this gross imagination we see; as we perceive, that the ideas of extension, shape, and figure, are not applicable to spirit, according to the notions which we have of it. But, though we have not eyes to discover the substance or properties of spirit, does it certainly follow, that they have nothing in them analogous to shape or figure, no properties by which they can be discerned, and distinguished the one from the other, by God, or even by other spiritual beings, to whom he may have given eyes and understanding fit to perceive what we cannot? And is it not, on the other hand, clear, that there may be somewhat analogous to figure, some particular modus of existence of the Deity, of which our want of ideas will not permit us to form any notion?

Had nature produced to our view such living creatures as wild fiction can present to our fancy, composed of three or more distinct bodies, absolutely separated from each other, without any bodily connexion, but actuated by one and the same principle, moving by one will, acting with one consent, each affected by the accidents that touch



touch either, the one wounded by the blow that wounds the other, and all dying by the killing of one; we should have had no distinct conception of what the Scripture represents concerning the Deity. But then, habituated to the sight of such an extraordinary creation as has been men-

tioned, the Scripture-doctrine would cease to be so shocking as it is to our wise men: and, yet, from their knowledge of the machinery of nature, they will hardly take upon them to say, that the Deity could not have created such an animal as has been feigned."

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